



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MEXICAN NATIONAL PLEADS GUILTY TO HIS ROLE IN ALIEN SMUGGLING
OPERATION**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced today that 32 year-old Jose Francisco Sanchez-Angeles pled guilty to a five count federal indictment charging him with Conspiracy to Smuggle, Transport & Harbor Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain, Harboring Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain, Providing a Firearm to Illegal Alien, Conspiracy to Use & Carry a Firearm During Crime of Violence, and Conspiracy to Commit Hostage Taking. Sanchez-Angeles, who faces up to life in federal prison, will be sentenced at a later date.

Earlier this year, Sanchez-Angeles' co-defendants Erik Angeles-Mendoza and Felipe Ceron-Espinoza were sentenced to 108 months in federal prison and Daniel Angeles-Mendoza to 78 months for their roles in the alien smuggling organization.

Had this case proceeded to trial, the government was prepared to prove that Sanchez-Angeles was the leader of an alien smuggling ring that was discovered as a result of a July 17, 2003, "9-1-1" call to the Austin Police Department. Upon responding, officers found a hostage situation where 26 illegal aliens from Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico, were being held pending the illegal smuggling fee of \$1500 - \$1800. On November 4, 2003, the Defendant, aka "El Gato or Paco," was arrested by Immigration and Custom Enforcement agents in Houston, Texas. The Defendant had previously been identified by at least two of the smuggled aliens as the leader or manager of the alien smuggling organization. According to the witnesses the Defendant, had driven a stolen black Ford truck in which they had been smuggled to the Austin residence and where they were being detained pending payment of their smuggling fees. In addition to firearms found at the defendants residence, he also provided the shotgun and ammunition to co-defendant, the illegal alien "enforcers", who guarded the smuggled aliens found inside the Austin residence.

This case was being investigated by the Anti-Smuggling Unit of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Austin Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Gerald Carruth prosecuted this case on behalf of the Government.

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